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STA/STA Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

34TH YEAR

June 13, 1977

NO. 24



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Unripe tomatoes should be kept at room temperature away from direct sunlight. Too much sunlight prevents development of even color, according to USDA home economists.

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Cover potatoes with water to prevent darkening if held after paring. But -- long soaking of most vegetables is not desirable because some nutrients dissolve in the water.

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Ever try a tablespoon of peanut butter on your sweetpotato instead of the more conventional toppings of butter, margarine or sour cream? Or -- for stuffed sweetpotatoes try adding a bit of orange juice and a little grated orange rind in place of the milk.

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"Potato" cheese? It's part curd (made either from sour milk or from milk to which rennet is added) and boiled, sieved potatoes with caraway seed. It's made in central Germany.

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"MANAGED" FLOUR

— FOR BAKING BREAD

The characteristics of wheat flour can be improved -- and flour modified to meet special needs (by incorporating additional steps in the milling process), according to food technologist Joel W. Dick of the Agricultural Research Service, U.S. of Agriculture in Fargo, North Dakota.

One of the "managed" flour processes involves partially taking apart the flour from less desirable wheat and blending selected components to produce a flour having baking characteristics superior to those of the original straight grade flour. The procedure could, for instance, extend the usefulness of semi-drawd hard red spring wheat. A study on wheat varieties indicated an opportunity for producing a "managed" flour higher in protein than the original. Another possibility, says Dr. Dick, would be to produce a "managed" flour with characteristics unlike those of available flours -- but, useful in new food products.

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USDA-1411-77

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

— AT HOME

Start the summer with a check-up on energy conservation in your home. Glenda Pifer, housing specialist for the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, suggests that you evaluate your resources used in daily family living. See what can be cut back or eliminated -- and conserve energy by recognizing conservation practices.

Protect Home From Summer Sun -- Plant trees, install a roof overhang to protect windows. Use awnings.

Utilize Breezes for Cooling During Warm Season -- open windows in evening -- close them during mid-day.

Temperature Control. Set air conditioning unit to recirculate cool air instead of pulling in warmer outside air. Increase temperature setting for summer air-conditioning 78°F or higher. Use window and attic fans for cooling during summer when outside temperature is below house temperature. Maintain heating and cooling equipment in good operating condition. Keep air filters clean to make it easier for heating and cooling system to do its job. Use kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans only when necessary. Shade windows from direct sun in summer with draperies and roll-up shades. Select an energy efficient air-conditioning unit the proper size for space to be cooled. It is better to buy a slightly undersized unit, rather than an oversized one.

Lighting. Turn off unnecessary lights, indoors and out. Reduce lighting levels to minimum for task to be performed. Use bulbs with lower wattage in halls, stairways, and other areas of general illumination. Use light colors in decorating to improve lighting efficiency. Do tasks which require a high light level during the daylight hours when possible.

(Con't. page 4)

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK (April 1977)

	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate- cost plan	Liberal plan
FAMILIES				
Young couple.....	\$23.40	\$30.90	\$38.70	\$46.40
Elderly couple.....	21.20	27.70	34.20	40.90
Family of 4 with preschool children.....	33.10	43.00	53.80	64.50
Family of 4 with elementary school children.....	39.80	51.90	65.10	78.00
INDIVIDUALS*				
Women				
20-54 years.....	9.60	12.70	15.70	18.80
55 years and over.....	8.80	11.50	14.10	16.80
Men				
20-54 years.....	11.70	15.40	19.50	23.40
55 years and over.....	10.50	13.70	17.00	20.40
Children				
1-2 years.....	5.40	6.80	8.50	10.10
3-5 years.....	6.40	8.10	10.10	12.20
6-8 years.....	8.20	10.60	13.30	15.90
9-11 years.....	10.30	13.20	16.60	19.90
Girls 12-19 years.....	9.80	12.60	15.60	18.70
Boys 12-14 years.....	10.90	14.00	17.60	21.10
15-19 years.....	12.00	15.50	19.40	23.40

* Cost of food at home for any family can be figured by totaling costs shown for individuals of sex and age of various members of the family as follows:

- o For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use amounts shown.
- o For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from amount in table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.
- o For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of amount shown in table for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than four people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown are for individuals in 4-person families. Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones. Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5 or 6, subtract 5 percent; 7 or more, subtract 10 percent.

Note: The publication "Family Food Budgeting for Good Meals and Good Nutrition," Home and Garden Bulletin No. 94, describes USDA's thrifty food plan (used in setting the coupon allotment in the Food Stamp Program) and the three more costly plans, on which these costs are based. Single copies are available from the Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Request publication by name and number and include your ZIP code.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT (CON'T)

Keep lighting fixtures clean. Use flourescent lighting for maximum light from electrical energy used. Use timers to turn lights on in the evening rather than leaving lights on all day when no one is home.

Heating Water Reduce the amount of hot water used -- Insulate long hot water pipes, especially those under the house or those that go through unheated basements -- repair leaky faucets -- maintain regular temperature settings of 140°F on water heater when hot water is needed.

Laundry Wash only full loads of laundry. Use heated water in only the washing cycle. Use water no hotter than necessary for adequate soil removal and sanitation -- use good laundry techniques to obtain satisfactory results in one washing process -- Avoid over drying in the dryer -- Line dry garments and household items when practical -- Use the dryer efficiently -- Avoid drying one or two items at one time -- Remove items when dryer stops to avoid unnecessary wrinkling which will require pressing to remove -- Reduce ironing to a minimum by careful selection of garments and household linens.

Cleaning and Maintenance Empty or replace vacuum cleaner bags frequently to keep it functioning efficiently -- Eliminate unnecessary vacuuming and floor polishing -- Use hand equipment rather than power equipment when practical. Develop preventive maintenance practices -- Routine checkups and servicing will prevent greater problems later.

Cooking and Baking Use oven to capacity -- Use cooking utensils which fit the electric unit or gas burner -- Use tight-fitting lids on cooking utensils, when appropriate -- Reduce heat to maintain necessary cooking temperatures when using surface units or burners. Turn off oven, surface units, or burners promptly when food is cooked.